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Part IV.—USEFUL INFORMATION.

CHAPTER I

RECREATIONS

CINEMAS

546 THERE are in Bahrain a number of cinemas, both public and private, which show films in various languages, English, Arabic, Hindustani and occasionally French and Italian. The Bahrain Petroleum Company, through the medium of the BAPCO Club, has an open-air cinema and theatre at Awali, at the former there are nightly (except Sunday) performances of comparatively recent American and British films, the programmes changing twice a week. There is also under construction a large air-conditioned cinema and theatre to which there will be an entrance fee and which will not be restricted to the European employees of BAPCO but will also be open to the general public.

The five cinemas in Manama, the Awal, the Ahli, the Bahrain and the National in Qudabiya and the Pearl Cinema on Government Road near the Government Hospital, the Muharraq Cinema, although they show a majority of Arabic films, often have English language films and usually there are two such films running every evening in Manama and Muharraq. Details of the performances are obtainable by phoning the cinemas and it is usually possible for those interested to have cinema notices sent to them as they appear.

Of the cinemas in Manama and Muharraq, five are especially pleasant in the summer, for they are open-roofed and are consequently very cool. One cinema has two open-air performances every day in the summer and in the winter an indoors performance; the sixth is air-conditioned.

536 There is no Bahrain theatre but there are a number of amateur dramatic clubs who give public shows from time to time.

CLUBS

575 *The Bahrain Club* (*Nadi al-Bahrain*). This is an Arab club in Muharraq with some 300 members and was founded in 1937 for cultural, social and sporting aims. The club has its own library with a large number of Arabic and English books and the latest newspapers and magazines. The members of the club are most interested in Arabic literature and have staged a number of plays. With the proceeds from the plays and with contributions from local merchants the club has been able to purchase its own buildings. Members of the club organize basket-ball and volley ball teams and also play a number of indoor sports.

The present premises of the club are to the north of Muharraq town, but they have become too small for the number of members and there are plans for the sale of the club buildings and the future construction of new and larger premises elsewhere in Muharraq. 575

Al-Ahli Club. This is the largest Arab club in Manama, it was founded in 1938 and to-day has a membership of 285, which figure is rapidly increasing. The club has much the same aims as the one described above. It has a library and reading room and from time to time members and visitors deliver talks and lectures. The Club has recently moved to its new premises on Daly Road in Quadabiya. The central hall of the club has a stage for theatricals and public lectures and it is proposed to build two tennis courts in the grounds of the club. The club also has an excellent football team which usually does well in inter-Bahrain and foreign matches.

Khalifah Eslah Club. The second of the two Muharraq clubs, the Khalifah Eslah Club, has 150 members. Formerly housed in a building in the centre of the town, at the time of writing the club is raising funds for a new building on the Muharraq Sea Road.

This club was also founded for cultural purposes and much of its activity is connected with intellectual pursuits. At monthly meetings members of the club deliver lectures on various topics and there is a committee which encourages such activities. The club itself is administered by an elected committee which holds fortnightly meetings at which matters of interest to the club are discussed and members' proposals considered. From time to time the club produces plays which are well attended by the general public. It does not, however, take part in any sports.

BAPCO Club. The membership of BAPCO Club, with the exception of some 80 outside members from Manama, amounts to 1100 European and American employees of BAPCO and 400 wives and 350 children, the latter two groups being honorary members. The Club with its manifold activities is organised by the Oil Company for the entertainment of its employees during their leisure hours. Among the sports played under the auspices of the Club are cricket, association football, golf, hockey, squash, and tennis, as well as rifle shooting, archery and riding. Some of these activities are organised by separate clubs but they are all dependent upon BAPCO for financial aid and are, therefore, part of the BAPCO Club. There is also in Awali an amateur dramatic society, a library and billiards rooms. 466 575

Every Thursday evening there is a dance at the club, once a month this is formal ; also in the winter there are old-time dances which are particularly well attended.

The Pakistan Club. As its name implies, the majority of the members of this club are Pakistanis, but its 200 members also include many other 575

575 nationalities. The Club does valuable service in providing entertainment for some of the Pakistanis in Bahrain, it organises various sports, including volley-ball, cricket, football and physical exercises as well as indoor games. Once or twice a month the Club holds Housey sessions which are well attended by members and visitors. Also very useful in Bahrain, where there is a shortage of public libraries, is this Club's library, which as well as being supplied with books is provided with the latest newspapers and magazines.

Bahrain Sports Club. This Club was founded in 1918 under the patronage of H.H. the Ruler of Bahrain and other local notables. Its aim is to provide recreational and social amenities, which include a library, for its 250 members, most of whom are Indian nationals.

The Club premises are situated in Quadibiya, on Belgrave Road, and include the main club buildings, two tennis courts and an indoor badminton court. There are also two table-tennis tables and facilities for chess, bridge, etc. The Club's major activity is cricket, in which it excels, having won the Championship Shield of the Bahrain Cricket Association for the three years 1950-52. Tennis and badminton tournaments are also held every year for cups donated by the Bahrain Petroleum Company and by other Bahrain firms. Once a month there is a tombola evening to which the general public is admitted.

The Club is managed by a committee of seven members who are elected every January.

The membership fee to the Club is *Rs.*3 per month, members also pay *Rs.*7 per month for the use of the tennis courts, *Rs.*3 per month for the use of the badminton court and a library deposit of *Rs.*5.

Gymkhana Club. This Club, which has been in existence for some years, is for the benefit of the British and American inhabitants of Manama, although there are also some members in Awali and Muharraq. The Club premises, attractively surrounded by gardens, are to the south of the Racecourse and include, in addition to the Club building itself, a swimming bath, tennis courts and a patio where dances are frequently held.

Applications for membership to the Club should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, the Gymkhana Club.

There are other clubs in Bahrain, The Ferdousi and Gulistan Clubs, the Aruba in Manama, the Nahada in Hedd and clubs in some of the villages, but these are not likely to be of interest to visitors to Bahrain as their activities are more specialised.

SPORTS

526 575 *Sailing.* Sailing is a pleasant relaxation which, in Bahrain, can be enjoyed all the year round. The recently formed Royal Air Force Sailing Club is actively promoting interest in sailing and dinghy racing

among residents of Bahrain and is filling a long-felt want for an organised centre for the small boat enthusiast. The R.A.F. Club was started in July 1951 mainly to provide a form of recreation for members of the R.A.F. stationed in Bahrain, but later it was found that many of the Britishers and Americans resident in Bahrain were interested in sailing so it was decided to admit fifty civilian members. In August 1952 the membership of the club numbered eighty.

The Club premises are open daily from noon to 8 p.m. except Fridays and Sundays when they open at 10 a.m. Races are held every week-end and there is a Club Day on the first Friday of each month. At the time of writing there are twelve sailing boats and numerous other craft at the Club, of the sailing boats, four are the property of the club, three loaned to it and the remainder are privately owned. There are also half-a-dozen dinghies, including four 14-foot "G.P. Dinghies" designed by Jack Holt—a class which it is planned to develop and also to encourage among private owner members. Helmsmanship is taught and tests must be passed before members are permitted to take out club boats. Sailing matches are arranged from time to time with the sailing club at Qatar.

The Club buildings are ideally situated in what used to be the B.O.A.C. Marine Airport. The premises are at the end of a short jetty which extends into the sea from a point of the shore of Manama in Quadaliya, and the areas protected from the full strength of the north-west and north winds by the mainland of Bahrain. The Khor Khaliya, the bay to the east of the Club, provides pleasant and safe water for races and the training of beginners. For qualified helmsmen who know these reef-ridden coastal waters there are many sailing excursions round the coast and to nearby islands.

The entrance fee to the R.A.F. Sailing Club for civilian members is 25 rupees with a monthly subscription of 10 rupees, the subscription for officers is *Rs.*5 and for airmen, *Rs.*3. Wives and families of members are included, paying no fees and having no voting rights.

Enquiries about membership of the Club, for which there is a long waiting list, should be made to the Hon. Secretary on forms supplied by him.

Fishing. "A S-T-R-I-K-E—Turn the boat!"; a pause, and then that triumphant warning scream from the reel which is music to all fishermen—"He's on." In Bahrain "he" may be a 7-lb. "Chanad" or a 40-lb Barracuda—they will both take the same 6-inch Wilson spoon or Stewart "wobbler."

The most popular method of fishing is Trolling, from any motor driven boat which can maintain a trolling speed of about 3-4 knots. A variety of rods are used—from light to heavy—and the humble hand-line is just as effective, although obviously not so much sport. Nickelled spoons, feather jigs and natural bait are the usual lures used for trolling. The best natural bait is a small gar-fish ("silts" in Arabic)

orginize the secondary school system. The teachers received from £25 to £30 a month and "bed and board" paid by the Bahrein government. Interestingly enough, the first director of the first school opened at Muharraq was the present Saudi Arabian Minister to London, Sheik Hafiz Wahba.

At present, there is no newspaper in Bahrein. A weekly newspaper, Al Bahrein, was founded in 1939, but ceased its publication after the death of its publisher, Abdallah Za-id. In 1940 a broadcasting station was built, and the Al-Bahrein Radio started short-wave broadcasts on a 23-m, 50 band on November 4. During the war, Radio Bahrein was most useful to the Allied cause, since its four daily news broadcasts in Arabic and Persian were heard more easily throughout the Near East than those of Egypt.

Besides the schools, two "circles" for the discussion of political and literary matters were established in 1935 under the patronage of the brother of the Sheik. There was already a Cercle Israelite in the island.

ECONOMY

The geographical features and the geological formation of the islands greatly reduce the economic value of Bahrein. The scarcity of water and the sandy nature of the soil exclude agricultural development. The application of modern methods of agriculture and the utilization of artesian wells and gasoline operated pumps are too recent and too inadequate to make Bahrein even partially independent of imported food. For many years to come, and probably forever, the islands will be dependent on food, meat, vegetables, and fruits brought chiefly from the Persian or Arabian mainland.

Fortunately, in most of the islands of the Persian Gulf and the surrounding regions, wherever water is found naturally or capured artificially, date palms grow with astonishing ease. The northern part of Bahrein Island, thanks to natural springs and more recently to artesian wells, is practically a string of oases with palm groves numbering several hundred thousands.